

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

With the present number of the Magazine we begin a new year of our activities as a Church. It is likely to be one of the most eventful in our history, and it behoves everyone of us to face the future with a solemn sense of responsibility and with a stern determination to do our duty to the uttermost. The great principles we prize are at stake, and the fair and fruitful future of our hopes and prayers depends in no uncertain way upon the present course of events at home and abroad. Not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of those we hold dear—the young ones in our homes, those who look to us for guidance in church and school—we must face resolutely and intelligently the mighty issues bound up with the fortunes of the great European war. If, as we hope, the latter will have ceased ere the end of this year to cast its baleful shadow upon

our lives, that can only be as a result of much self-sacrifice on the part of all classes of the community. Already many of us have much at stake in the shape of relatives and friends who are doing battle for their country and its great cause. There, where our deepest feelings are most engaged, much will be demanded of us, and we shall need all the consolation which our religion is able to give. But we must not hesitate to make the course of duty clear to those who are in doubt how best to give this active help. More men are still needed to turn the scale in our favour and to place the issue beyond doubt. Such lack of reinforcements will mean the prolonging of a struggle already so disastrous and destructive of human lives. But, while we see to that aspect of affairs, we must not be blind to the urgent and increasing demands which will be made upon ourselves who cannot serve abroad. Many causes, financial and otherwise, will appeal to us for support, and we must resolve that they appeal not in vain. Yet even more imperative than the demands for material aid are those made upon our sympathy and our Christian charity. All Churches are upon their trial in this time of stress. Men and women, who at other times are seemingly careless as to religion, are now turning to it for the help and comfort they so much need. Life has become increasingly serious, daily duties are seen in a new and a clearer light, human relationships appear closer and more sacred. But we have always claimed for our religion that it is all-comprehensive in its scope—that while it kindles the fervour of private devo-

tion, it also gives importance and sanctity to every public duty. Surely it is now the time to vindicate such a claim. May we as a Church be alive to our duty and to our great opportunity! May sad hearts be cheered, weary spirits find rest, old and young alike be stirred to a nobler constancy and a more exacting sense of duty, and may our Heavenly Father bless us in every unselfish endeavour.

* *

We still continue to receive additional names for our Roll of Honour, and hence we propose in a future issue of this Magazine to re-publish the names which appeared in the December number, together with such supplementary names. As we wish to make the list as complete and up-to-date as possible, we earnestly appeal to the responsible officials in our different congregations to let us have the fullest and most accurate information. It is better, when convenient, to furnish particulars as to rank, regiment, etc., so that there may be uniformity in the various lists supplied. There should be no difficulty in this, as we presume that each of our congregations is compiling a careful list of its own members who have volunteered for the war.

* *

It is always of interest, and sometimes helpful, "to see ourselves as others see us," and consequently we have no hesitation in referring to "The Ulster Scot," the work of an orthodox Presbyterian minister, the Rev. James B. Woodburn, M.A. In the course of that work he has to deal with old controversies, in which his sympathies obviously take a different side from that which we favour. Yet, despite that fact, the author is desirous of doing justice to the opponents of his own Church. Thus, speaking of those who contended for Non-Subscription, he says:—"These men have been condemned by most of the historians of the Irish Presbyterian Church in the severest manner, but in the kindlier light of the present day we can judge them more fairly. We may describe their views as broad and tolerant. They helped to enlighten the Church, and to

prepare her to meet the more liberal views of the next century. They served to protect her from bigotry and dogmatism, and to keep her faith sane, and to prevent its being divorced from culture and learning. Had her members, however, been left entirely under the guidance of those men, her spirituality would have suffered. Some of them were men of the deepest religious insight, but the majority did not preach anything higher than a moral life, which would have been totally unable to keep the Church from becoming a wreck in the stormy days which lay before her." This not unsuccessful attempt to hold the balance truly is one we may gladly welcome, much as we may feel indisposed to accept his concluding remarks.

* *

The Temperance Committee of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland have requested that the *Third Sunday* of January shall be observed as Temperance Sunday in our Churches. With a view to stimulating interest in the cause, a general exchange of pulpits is suggested, and it is hoped that, as far as possible, this arrangement will be adopted. At the present time it is our duty to take part in the forward movement being made in all the Christian Churches, and the opportunity afforded is one that should be welcomed.



A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE.

BY REV. E. H. PICKERING, B.A.

WHEN the Editor asked me to write this message he carefully warned me: "Remember, this is for an exceptional year." What he meant is unfortunately all too clear. His mind was full of this awful and devastating war. But when we begin to look closely at things, the thought inevitably arises: "Is this year, after all, so exceptional?" If it were, then all other years must have been years of peace, which they by no means were. Not only have there always been wars of a sort, but the whole of our so-called peaceful society is in a continual state of war. The words of St. Paul: "The whole creation

groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," are just as true of his time as of ours. Somehow, humanity has always persisted in going wrong by looking for its soul's satisfaction in fleeting material things. There is this consolation, however, that this quest has not brought peace in its train. Had it brought peace, we should have known that the material world was all that our souls desire and need for their satisfaction. We are at war with one another because we are dissatisfied. Daily thousands of precious lives are being sacrificed even when we think we are at peace. Our social and economic systems are not systems at all, but armed conflicts, in which men, trying to be men in the wrong way, succeed like beasts and fail like beasts. If all was right with the existing order, then it would not be so disorderly; men would not feel so uneasy and dissatisfied with their success, and so restless and envious in their failure. Even within the Christian church itself, we are made to realise that Christianity is still a new and unattained religion, by reason of the bigotry, sectarianism, and hatred that prevail. Is there peace even within our hearts? If there were, if we had really known what peace was, then this present war would indeed have been exceptional; so exceptional that it could never have happened. It is, however, but a part of our ordinary experience.

Where it appears exceptional is, that now, for the first time, perhaps, we see all the war in the heart of the world concentrated in one murderous conflict. We see the sufferings and miseries, and enmities which have long existed unobserved by reason of their frequency, in poor squalid streets, and in luxurious mansions, raised to an extreme pitch of horror in the magnificent bravery and sufferings of our gallant lads at the front and on the sea. This *is* war, we cry, as if it were something exceptional, when it is simply the war that is always with us, revealed in all its terrible ferocity.

It may be that someone will wonder what is the good of making this point. It may be thought that a stirring re-

mindar of the principles for which we are fighting could have been more useful in a new year's message. But that has been done well and frequently already. Our desire is to make a stirring appeal to all the latent (but none the less real) Christianity in humanity, to arise and put an end, not merely to this war, but to all that which causes war. At the present time armies and navies (to which the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland has honourably contributed its quota), are necessary to bring this war to a successful issue, and restore Europe to normality. But we have to do more than that if we would really put an end to war; we have so to alter the normal state of things, and our normal selves, that they cease to be the causes of war. Until that is done we can never be secure against war in the future. If any poor gloomy, unchristian pessimist retorts that we cannot change human nature, the reply is that human nature is always changing. Without going into detail, one glance over the history of the ages is enough to convince that although man is still fighting for the wrong things, he is gradually getting nearer the right things. The spiritual idea is so potent in us now, that we refuse to regard this present war as anything but an exceptional break in our normal experience, whereas it would have been regarded as quite a normal thing a century or two ago. We have but to go a step further, and, bringing our spiritual eye to bear, realise that what we call our normal experience is in fact abnormal and contrary to all we most desire, and sometimes attain, in honest work, sincere love, tender confidence, and noble thought. Then we shall have got to the fundamental causes of war, and it will not be long before we are on the highway of the Eternal King, that leads to eager and soul-inspiring peace.



BIRTH.

PHELPS.—December 18th, at Beechcroft, Holwood, to Rev. and Mrs. G. Leonard Phelps—a daughter.

AFTER THREE HUNDRED YEARS.

BALLYCARRY, 1613-1913.

BY DR. JOHN CAMPBELL.

*(From the late Rev. Claddon Porter's
"Memoirs.")*

IF you take your Bible and read the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, and compare His teaching with that of the creeds and Confessions of the Churches, you will find that there is a wide difference between them. The fact is, these creeds and confessions give us the opinions of men who lived long after Jesus, rather than the teaching of Christ Himself. For this reason the old Presbyterian Congregation of Ballycarry is Non-Subscribing. For three hundred years it has objected to being compelled to accept a creed or Confession of Faith, because its members believed "that the teaching of Christ Himself should take precedence of the doctrines of a later time," and hoped for the dawn of the day when all Protestants would take for their guide the teaching and example of Jesus in preference to the opinions of Athanasius or Calvin, or any other theologian. Firm in this belief, and in this hope, the congregation remains Non-Subscribing to creed or Confession of Faith, and adhering to the commands and example of Christ Jesus.

The congregation of Ballycarry, formerly known as Broadisland, has the distinction of being the first congregation in Ireland to be settled with a Presbyterian minister from Scotland, and is, therefore, the oldest Presbyterian congregation in Ireland. From the beginning it was Non-Subscribing—at first to the Creeds and Articles of the Episcopal Church, and later on to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Consequently its history may be divided into three periods.

I. 1613-1719.—STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

I. EDWARD BRICE, M.A., became minister of Broadisland in 1613. Previous to that time he had been for many years minister of Drymen, in Stirlingshire. He is said to have come to Ire-

land because his opposition to Episcopacy in 1607 had made it necessary for him to leave Scotland. At that time it was customary for some of the Ulster bishops to ordain and instal Presbyterian ministers in their parishes after the Presbyterian manner. In this way Edward Brice was probably received as the Presbyterian incumbent of the Parish of Templecorran. Later on he was also made Prebendary of Kilroot by Bishop Echlin. He is said to have preached alternately at Broadisland (Ballycarry) and at Ballykeel, Islandmagee. The church at Ballycarry had its walls newly erected, but not roofed, in 1622. At the same time the church at Kilroot was ruinous. Religion was thus not very prosperous. In 1629 and 1630 Brice had, as his assistant, Henry Colvert, who was afterwards minister at Oldstone. Apparently the assistant was needed, because Brice was in ill health. He had been unable to keep his engagement to preach the Communion sermon at Templepatrick in 1630 owing to illness. He, for some reason, escaped being silenced by Bishop Echlin in 1632, though Livingstone (of Killinchy), Blair (of Bangor), Dunbar (of Larne), and Welsh (of Templepatrick), were condemned. Trouble was, however, in store for him. In 1636 the new Bishop, Leslie, sentenced five ministers, including Brice, to perpetual silence within his diocese. Not long after this Brice died, at the age of 67, and was buried at Ballycarry, where his tombstone may still be seen in the old church. After a useful ministry in Ballycarry, extending over twenty-three years, Edward Brice, for refusing to subscribe the Canons of the Church of Ireland, was cruelly sentenced when he was virtually on his deathbed. Thus began the cause of Non-Subscription in Ballycarry.

Edward Brice's eldest son, Robert, resided at Castle Chichester (Whitehead), and acquired landed property at Kilroot. His descendants in course of time renounced the Presbyterian faith, and changed the name to Bruce. Their property was sold in 1851, and the name Brice no longer exists in the neighbourhood of Ballycarry.

For ten years (1636 to 1646) there was no settled minister in Ballycarry. The country was unsettled owing to the rebellion of the native Irish against the English Government, and the congregation had to depend on the services of the chaplains in Monro's Scottish army, and of ministers sent over from Scotland.

2. The second minister was ROBERT CUNNINGHAM. He was ordained in 1646. In 1649 he had to flee in a boat to Co. Down to avoid being taken by soldiers of the Duke of Ormond, who was hostile to the Presbyterians. In 1653 Cromwell had it in mind to remove Cunningham and his Presbyterian congregation to Tipperary, but the scheme was never carried out. In addition to these troubles from outside sources, this minister had others within his congregation. He was so ill rewarded for his services by his people that in 1654 the Presbytery threatened to transfer him to another sphere of work, if the congregation did not requite him more liberally. In 1661, under the Act of Uniformity, Cunningham was deposed from the ministry by Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and ejected from his benefice.

After 1770 more leniency was accorded to the Presbyterians, and the question of building a meeting-house in Ballycarry was before the Presbytery in 1773. There is no evidence as to when that work was accomplished. It is, however, recorded that the congregation continued to act ungenerously towards the minister, and the Presbytery had the matter before them repeatedly. During the wars of 1688 and 1689 Cunningham appears to have remained in Ireland, though most of the Presbyterian ministers retired to Scotland. For two years before his death he had the famous Jonathan Swift as his neighbour at Kilroot. Cunningham died in 1697, and was buried in the old churchyard at Ballycarry. He was unmarried, and lies in a nameless grave, covered with a plain freestone slab.

From 1697 to 1700 there was no settled minister. Hitherto the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had flourished under the traditions of the old Scottish

Confession of John Knox and his contemporaries, and had maintained the great principle of Non-Subscription to human creeds and confessions for close on one hundred years. In spite of three vigorous attempts, made in 1633, 1661, and 1702, to compel them to accept the creeds and articles of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterians had firmly held their ground. Strange as it may seem, as the pressure exercised upon them by the Bishops relaxed, and finally ceased on the passing of the Toleration Act in 1719, some members of the Presbyterian Church began to hanker after a creed for themselves, and ultimately selected one even more objectionable in many ways than those which Episcopacy had tried to force upon them. As a result of this reversion to the Roman Catholic ideal in religious affairs, a long struggle concerning the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith began in the ranks of Irish Presbyterianism during the ministry of the next pastor of Ballycarry.

II. 1719—1829.—STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBSCRIPTION TO THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH.

3. JAMES COBHAM was ordained minister of Broadisland in 1700. He appeared as a witness at the last trial for witchcraft held in this country, which took place at Carrickfergus in 1711. Two incidents, which occurred during his ministry, show the tolerant attitude of the people of Ballycarry at this time. In 1704, Archibald Edmonstone, of Red Hall, a member of the Presbyterian congregation, signed a protest against the Sacramental Test clause in the Act to prevent the further growth of Popery, and James Cobham and Colonel Brice were against the exclusion of Rev. Mr. Nevin, of Downpatrick, when he was tried for heresy.

Like his predecessor, Cobham had a good deal of trouble in getting the means of living from his stipend-payers. He died on February 22nd, 1759, and was buried in Ballycarry, where a free-stone slab, on which is cut a coat of arms, but no inscription, is believed to mark his grave. It is beside the tombstone of his granddaughter, Mary Craig. He left a son, James Cobham,

His descendants married into the families of farmers in the district.

After the death of this minister there was a vacancy of four years, during which time the congregation was supplied by the Presbytery of Templepatrick. The congregation owed James Cobham a considerable sum at his death, many of the members having got greatly in arrears with their stipend. His son and executor brought the matter before the Presbytery, and much time was wasted before a settlement between the contending parties was arrived at, and the way thus left open for the ordination of a new minister.

4. JOHN BANKHEAD was ordained in 1763 as fourth minister of Ballycarry, a position he was destined to occupy for the long span of seventy years. At this time the attempt to enforce acceptance of the Westminster Confession had become a practical failure. Young men anxious for congregations had found that they could not in all sincerity accept the confession as a true statement of their faith, and several formulas of subscription came into use. By adopting a loose or ambiguous formula, the candidate gained his pulpit without exciting adverse criticism, and at the same time saved his conscience in regard to those portions of the Creed which he did not believe. While better than subscription with mental reservations, this custom was not a good one. Bankhead's ordination is an example of how the thing was done. He subscribed the following formula:—"I believe the Westminster Confession to contain a system of Christian doctrines, which doctrines I subscribe as the confession of my faith.—J. Bankhead." This left him free to take or leave as much of the Confession as he thought fit. Such was the result of the Synod's attempt to coerce its licentiates.

Bankhead's ministry was, on the whole, an uneventful one. Minister and people lived in harmony, and frequently, at visitations of the Presbytery, expressed their satisfaction with one another. In 1774 the congregation of Comber made a strong and unanimous appeal to Bankhead to become their minister. After consideration he

declined this invitation, and gratified his people by deciding to fall in with their desire that he should remain in Ballycarry. In 1812, when his ministry had lasted forty-nine years, Bankhead joined with the congregation in an application to Presbytery to allow an assistant and successor to be appointed. The choice fell upon William Glendy. Bankhead did not die until 1833, when he departed this life on July 5th, in the ninety-seventh year of his age, and the seventieth of his ministry. A tombstone in the old churchyard of Templecorran marks his grave. Married twice, he had twenty-two children, of whom nineteen reached maturity.

5. WILLIAM GLENDY, a native of Faughanvale, Co. Derry, was ordained on July 30th, 1812. He was not called upon to subscribe the Westminster Confession, either when he was licensed or when he was ordained. Henry Cooke, of Donegore, who later became the well-known Dr. Cooke, of Belfast, preached the ordination sermon.

One of the most noteworthy features of the earlier years of Glendy's ministry was the visitation of Presbytery in May, 1828, when it was stated that the number of communicants present at the last preceding celebration of the Lord's Supper had been three hundred; that the young communicants who had come forward for the first time during the last year numbered sixty; and that the congregation was interested in the following bequests:—The Edmonstone Bequest, appropriated to the education of poor children; (2) Miss Lewis's Bequest of £100; and (3) Mr. Ker's Bequest of £400, entrusted to the vicar and the minister for the use of the poor.

III. 1829—1913. THE BIBLE THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND DUTY.

In 1829 the congregation of Ballycarry had to decide whether it would bind itself to a creed in the form of the Westminster Confession of Faith, or continue to stand for the old watchwords of Presbyterianism, "The Open Bible," and "The Right of Private Judgment." William Glendy and the majority of his people were convinced that the teaching of Christ should be

preferred to the teaching of Calvin, and joined the ranks of the Remonstrants, who held that creeds and confessions were "unscriptural, and were assumptions of infallibility, and relics of Popery," and that, as the teaching of Christ laid special stress on morals and on the formation of character, human tests of theological belief tended to overshadow it and weaken its influence.

Glendy took an active part in the Remonstrant movement. He organised a congregation in Carrickfergus in 1833, and co-operated in the establishment of one at Raloo in 1838. He also worked hard for the passing of the Dissenters Chapels Bill.

In 1852 he asked leave to take an assistant and successor, and Thomas O'Gorman was appointed. Glendy died in 1853, in the seventy-first year of his age, and forty-first of his ministry. He and his wife were buried in his own meeting-house green in Ballycarry. They had no family.

6. THOMAS O'GORMAN was ordained assistant and successor to William Glendy on September 29th, 1852. He resigned the charge in April, 1854.

7. MOORE GETTY was ordained on December 27th, 1854. During this ministry the present manse was built, and considerable improvements made to church and school property. Mr. Getty will be remembered chiefly as an untiring pastor, and as one deeply interested in the promotion of the Temperance cause and in the well-being of the young people in the Sunday school. In 1898 he applied to Presbytery to grant him an assistant and successor, when the Rev. W. G. Marsden was ordained to the office. Rev. Moore Getty died December 1898, and was interred in the old graveyard, Ballycarry.

8. REV. W. G. MARSDEN, the present minister, was ordained in 1898. During his ministry the meeting-house has been renovated and many modern improvements added. Among these may be mentioned especially a new organ, the half cost of which was contributed by Mr. Andrew Carnegie. A sum of money has been raised to form a fund for the support of the ministry in Ballycarry.

THE ARMY AND ALCOHOL.

BY REV. J. A. KELLY.

A DANGER of the gravest kind confronts our country at the present time, and it is the duty of every citizen to do all that is possible to meet that danger in the most efficient way. The call for help in men to join the colours is being nobly responded to, and those who are not eligible are working with great earnestness to support and encourage those who have been judged to be qualified to take an active share in the terrible war which Germany has forced upon us. We are fighting, not to extend our geographical boundaries, but to preserve the liberty which is essential to our progress and happiness, and without which life would not be worth living. Though the response to the nation's call has been encouraging, yet more men are needed to crush for ever that most awful conspiracy that threatens not only our welfare, but that of mankind.

We are not only anxious that sufficient men should be forthcoming, but that they should be thoroughly cared for, both physically and morally, so that their efficiency for their arduous work may be of the highest possible kind. The physical care of our men leaves little to complain of, but the moral safeguards are not what they should be, and could easily be, if the people and authorities took the matter more thoroughly in hand. More attention should be paid to the grave warnings of such men as Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener regarding the "treating" of soldiers, and their use of alcoholic drinks. Both of these military authorities have, time and again, declared that one of the many valuable lessons which an extended experience had taught them is that strong drink was one of the greatest enemies of the efficiency of the soldier. It behoves us, therefore, to do all in our power to have this subtle temptation removed from the path of our soldiers. Our people should be warned about the thoughtless folly of "treating" them to strong drink. No doubt "treating" is regarded by many as a

way of showing kindness to them, but in reality it is not a kindness, and the money so spent could be used to be of real service to the soldier. Let there, then, be such widespread attention drawn to this subject that the thoughtless public may make no more victims of what is at best but mistaken kindness.

Attention should also be directed to the matter of strong drink in camps. The wet canteen is a danger to the men. Some of the officers defend its existence on the ground that it is better for the men to get drink of known strength and quality under certain limited and supervised conditions in the canteen than to procure it outside.

It does not follow that men will seek drink outside if they cannot get it inside the camp. Often what they get inside makes them more ready to look for it when they go outside. The wet canteen is undoubtedly a temptation to men to spend their leisure time within its precincts. Drink is taken which would not be thought of were there no facilities for getting it present, and it is known that some fine young fellows have been tempted to violate their principles in regard to abstinence because of the presence of the wet canteen. There is a very serious responsibility resting on the shoulders of the authorities in regard to this matter, and the appeal of the army to the nation for more men would be greatly strengthened if the wet canteen were removed from the camp. If this were done efficiency would be increased, and many anxieties would be taken from the minds of the fathers and mothers and friends of our brave soldiers. Military and naval authorities never grow weary in declaring that abstinence from alcoholic drink is necessary for the highest efficiency. Russia and France, to their credit be it said, have prohibited the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, and Germany has restricted by 40 per cent. the production of alcohol, and surely it is not too much to ask that the United Kingdom shall do at least as much in this important direction as her allies in a life and death struggle have done. If the army gave

up the use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, its efficiency would be increased by that represented by many battalions. Our appeal now is from the patriotic as well as from the Christian standpoint. Let us be up and doing in this matter; let the treating of our soldiers be abandoned, and let the wet canteen be banished from our camps.

This short article cannot be more appropriately closed than by quoting the verses by O. S., entitled "To a False Patriot"—

He came, obedient to the call;
He might have shirked like half his mates,
Who, while their comrades fight and fall,
Still go to swell the football gates.
And you, a patriot in your prime,
You waved a flag above his head,
And hoped he'd have a high old time,
And slapped him on the back, and said:
"You'll show 'em what we British are!
Give us your hand, old pal, to shake;"
And took him round from bar to bar,
And made him drunk—for England's sake.
That's how you helped him. Yesterday,
Clear-eyed, and earnest, keen, and hard,
He held himself the soldier's way—
And now they've got him under guard.
That doesn't hurt you; you're all right;
Your easy conscience takes no blame;
But he, poor boy, with morning light,
He eats his heart out, sick with shame.
What's that to you? you understand
Nothing of all his bitter pain;
You have no regiment to brand;
You have no uniform to stain;
No vow of service to abuse,
No pledge to King and country due;
But he had something dear to lose,
And he has lost it—thanks to you.

Obituary.

MR. WILLIAM NELSON, R.D.C.
NEWS of the death of Mr. William Nelson, R.D.C., which took place at his residence, Burnside, Kilwaughter, on Sunday, 6th December, will be heard with sincere regret by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances all over County Antrim, and particularly in the Larne Rural District, in which he formed many lasting friendships. Deceased, who had for a number of years been a member of the Larne Board of Guardians and Rural District Council, was a familiar figure in Larne and neighbourhood, and his demise will be much

regretted by those who formed an acquaintanceship, either through business associations, or by reason of having come into contact with him in the social sphere of life. Through his death the electoral division of Kilwaughter has lost a faithful and energetic representative, one who was not slow to advocate the claims of the division which had unanimously elected him as one of its representatives, and who was ever alive to the calls of those ratepayers who had reposed confidence in him. Whilst ever on the alert, where the interests of those whom he immediately represented were concerned, he was none the less conscious of his duty to the ratepayers in the rural district as a whole, and he would have scorned the action which, while benefitting the ratepayers in one locality, would, on the other hand, have meant the subversion of the claims of ratepayers in other divisions. His removal by death leaves a vacancy which will be keenly felt, but in no quarter more so than at the Larne Boardroom where his good-natured banter and cheery presence made him a distinct favourite.

Previous to August, when deceased fell ill, he had all the appearance of a robust, healthy man, but since that time the state of his health gave rise to some anxiety. He gradually declined, and when he last attended a meeting of the Guardians, on Wednesday, 23rd September, he bore unmistakable traces of illness. His condition did not improve, and he was eventually removed to a nursing home in Belfast, but as no beneficial effect was noticeable, he returned home to Kilwaughter, where he passed away, as stated, on Sunday, 6th ult.

The funeral, which took place on Tuesday, 8th Dec., to Kilwaughter Cemetery, was a very large and representative one, and testified in a striking manner to the popularity of deceased in the district in which he lived. Rev. James Kennedy officiated at deceased's residence and at the graveside.

* *

MR. JOHN SMYTH, M.E.,
BANBRIDGE.

THE Grim Reaper has been busy in our midst this winter, and has taken a heavy

toll of our older residents in Banbridge. The latest to cross the bourne and join the great majority is that grand old man, John Smyth, of Milltown, who answered the call on Wed., 16th Dec., at Milltown House, having attained the patriarchal age of eighty-five. Death for him was a sunset; he came to the grave "in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season," and there is no one whose passing will be more sincerely mourned.

A son of John Smyth, of Milltown, who died about twenty-five years ago, in early life he showed scientific tastes and became a Civil Engineer, taking the degree of M.E. Subsequently he came into his father's business, where his engineering knowledge was of great service to the firm. He kept up his scientific tastes till the end, and was a keen observer and recorder of climatic and atmospheric conditions, and his contributions to various scientific journals were widely read and highly appreciated.

Prominently identified with the Unitarian Church, he was a Trustee of the Remonstrant Synod, and a member of nearly all the committees and organisations of the Church for the past thirty years. He became a Trustee of the First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church Funds about the year 1881, and for more than forty years was one of the leaders and most respected members of the Banbridge Congregation—a man to whom the entire congregation looked up to and held in the highest esteem. Elder of the Church, Chairman of Committee, Superintendent of the Sunday School, where he taught uninterruptedly for more than half a century.

The great work of his life was in connection with the cause of Temperance. He was a member of the first Good Templar Lodge in Banbridge, and a most consistent and indefatigable supporter of total abstinence, and, in conjunction with the late Mr. John Simms, of Moorlands, was zealous in everything connected with the cause. The Temperance Hall was built by them, and both were content to lose money over it for love of the cause. They were the two grand old men of Temperance in Banbridge. Mr. Smyth wore his blue

ribbon to his latest day, and was faithful to that idea long after it had become a memory only to most people. His activities were not confined to this neighbourhood alone; he was zealous for Temperance work in all quarters of the Unitarian Church organisation and in other churches where he had the opportunity, and he was one of the Vice-presidents of the local Catch-My-Pal Union.

His devotion to Sunday School work was only second to his zeal for Temperance. Sunday after Sunday, in all seasons, and under all circumstances, he was faithful to his trust, and taught his classes till within a few months of his death.

Gentle, courteous, kind, a helper to all good causes, a friend to all in sorrow a man beyond reproach who kept the even tenor of his quiet, unassuming, helpful way through the world, he was the doyen of his congregation, esteemed by all as the model of a Christian gentleman, and one whom we can ill afford to lose. There can have been few more stainless lives.



"OURSELVES."

PORTION of a paper read before members of the Unity Guild by Mr. George J. Hill at a meeting held in the Mount-pottinger Schoolroom, on November 18th. There was a good attendance, and the paper, which was listened to with much interest, aroused considerable discussion. After thanking the members for the honour paid him, Mr. Hill proceeded as follows:—

Eight years ago our Guild was launched at a somewhat slow and dragging meeting, and that to some extent has been its character since—no doubt inherited, not so much from that meeting, as from our Church. Now our Church is a great one in everything, except being. It is, first of all, a free Church, whose members are a free people, bound by no creed or confession of faith, the last possible trace of which disappeared when our old nickname, "Unitarian" was given up, and we joined together as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

"So many paths, so many creeds,
So many ways that wind and wind,
While all the creed this old world needs—
The simple art of being kind.

But with all these great advantages, was there—is there not—something wanting—a something which the men who started the Unity Guild thought it would supply? A something which is wanted to-day behind our new Church organization as much as ever before, and which I believe the Guild could do not a little to fulfil? It may be that our very strength is to some extent our weakness. Some men find it easier to fight for something fixed and concrete—such as the 39 Articles—an absolute impossibility in a world whose key note is change and growth, and in which any stop means death and a forced renewal that way—than to stand up for an ideal Church, such as ours, open to every man, no matter what he believes or does not believe, leaving him free to think out his own line in his own way.

But I think the real cause is a very natural one, and it is simply that we have got out of training. A nation, a team, or a man having made some effort, and gained their, or his, point, slackness sets in, and, because of their very fitness, they can enjoy to the full rest and dissipation, and are therefore more than liable to indulge too much and too long, so that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to "get back" at all. Since our Church fought for and won her freedom there has been no need for her to go into strict training, but that is no reason why she should not lead a good, healthy life, for it was not a trophy she won, but a right to be made use of.

That there were high hopes for the Guild when it was started we have only to look at our second rule, which runs:—"The object of the Guild shall be to associate young people for social intercourse, and the promotion in all possible ways of their intellectual and spiritual life," and to remember the fair promises that were held out of what the Guild would be and what it would be able to do. Here are a very few, as I remember them:—It was to be a Guild for young lay men (and women), youth not to be counted by years, and was not only to

hold meetings of many sorts, but was to help our ministers in a great many different ways to carry on the work of our Church. There was to be a real social unity and intercourse between our Churches, so much so that a member from one of our country Churches coming to live in town would at once find himself among friends, and so add to our strength, instead of drifting away from us, as a good many were said to do. That these hopes would be fulfilled all at once was not to be expected, but that after eight years of life we are no further on than we were a few weeks after we started is rather a disappointment.

Now I think it is quite clear that we have not been in close enough touch with our young people. I take it that our young people are quite as good as ever they were, and our Guild is good, too—so far as it goes. Looking over the file of our programmes, backed up with the memory of many pleasant evenings, I cannot see why they should not have been of more interest to our members and their friends. That they were not is shown by the small attendance most evenings—sometimes, I am sorry to say, made smaller by ministers, or those under them, holding meetings on the same night, although our fixture had been made long in advance. We do not want a crowd of our members to come out from a sense of duty, and unless they are really interested in what is on, or it gives them pleasure, they are right to stay away. In the mere amusement line we cannot hope to compete with the professional entertainments in a large city like this, therefore we must start with what does interest our young people at present—if we can find that out—and try to work up from that.

To get a beginning made on this bridge work and background, as it were, our last general meeting instructed the new Committee to draw up a draft of new rules to put before the Guild, the main idea being that the members of the Guild in each Church should get together and form a local centre, if they feel so inclined, and I hope our new rules will contain a proposed draft of

rules for forming and running such a centre. I see no reason why some, at least, of our country Churches should not come in. If they did, we might get to know most of our young friends even before they came up to live in town, and so do well, in an anticipatory way, one of the things we set out to do. Of course the Unity Guild, as we know it, would be the central body linking up our different branches. So much for the machinery.

Now a word as to starting a local centre and as to what it might do. First of all, we might take the case of a Church with a very full programme, one with a meeting of one sort or another on almost every night of the week, so that to add more would be only an extra burden on minister and workers for no good purpose. In that case the Guild might be the means of joining up some of these and so make them stronger. One thing we must set clearly before us is that we are out to help our ministers. Therefore, while not being debarred in any way from holding office in the Guild, it would be advisable for them not to do so. I say this, not because we do not want their help. We do want that, and also their advice and guidance. But we want them to help us to help ourselves. They should be *ex-officio* members of committees.

Secondly, let us take a Church with few or no week-day meetings. A local centre might be formed by a few friends talking the matter over among themselves, and they might arrange for a small social evening, inviting as many live people as they could. After a cup of tea, someone would put before the meeting the object in view, and, after time had been allowed for discussion, a kind of game of what might be called Impudent Questions could be played, a card being handed to each person asking their favourite author, books, sport (indoor or outdoor), hobby, etc. This might not be much of a game, but the cards with their answers would be a great help to those in charge. I suppose debates and reading circles would be the chief thing taken up, but other things might find a place—field clubs, rifle shooting, etc. But whatever line

or lines taken up something for each member to do other than just to attend a meeting must be found. At debates members would take their turn to say a word, and a paper would be expected of each.

The advantages of these centres would be that our members could meet more often and so keep in closer touch with what was going on, and that it would be easier to get young members to their feet, or at least to take a more active part. Later on inter-local centre meetings could be held, the members of one trying their skill against the other. And it would be a Red Letter night when the local centre had the honour of a visit from the Guild, each trying to make theirs the best.

A great deal will depend on the chairman whether the meetings at a local centre, as indeed elsewhere, will be successful or not. The job needs a large amount of brains, not indeed to be exhibited by him by showing how much more he knows than the principal speaker on all and every occasion—even if he does, but when mixed with a large amount of tact, to enable him to be quick to see a point, even when badly expressed, or when only hinted at by someone who may be a beginner, and to whom a little help might mean wonders. Strong to hold in check those who have found their feet and are too forward, also strong to know when to hold and when to call up his reserves—those whom he knows have the connection between brain and tongue so highly developed that they can make a good show at any time.

A meeting may often be saved by such means, but you can save a meeting at too great a price, for each call on reserves makes them less useful. To try to go through a whole season by such means is unthinkable.

If things worked any way well, what would the Guild become? and what place would it hold? Well, first—it would act as a bridge between our Sunday School and Meeting House, and would be a training ground for our members, who would be ready and willing to take their place when called on. In the past we have had a very

wide range of subjects, in fact we have been willing to hear anyone on anything, and this will be equally wide in the future, but subjects more closely connected with our Church might easily find a larger place. Any new movement that happened along is pretty well likely to be heard of first by the Unity Guild, and we shall have given it careful thought and formed a healthy public opinion upon it, and can then throw our weight for or against. The whole idea may seem very commonplace, but please remember that this is only a rough sketch of an imperfect skeleton, on which has to be built the living flesh of common efforts with the warm blood of friendship coursing through it. Far more than all the rest would be the good fellowship, which would be real, and no matter which way that conflict may go, which we, as an Empire, have pledged ourselves to see through to the bitter end, we shall need all the mutual help we can give each other in the time that is to come.

Now, while it is quite true that unity is strength, it is also true that that strength will be the greater if the individual members are strong. Here is what a friend of mine has written:—

“Nothing is of any use unless it gives me a stronger body and mind—a more beautiful body, a happy existence, and a soul life now.”

Bearing on that, here is a hint which may be helpful. Physical culture may be very easily made fun of, but we must remember we lead a somewhat artificial mode of life, so that a few minutes spent with Lieutenant Müller's “My System” every morning would be far from wasted. This, to my mind, is the best and least faddy of any of the systems, but, even with it, you must use your own judgment. Two hints to readers—and we are all that now-a-days—in this case I only pass them on. First, take a note of the names of all the books you read. Second, don't spend all your available reading time in reading: take a night off now and then, and just think of what you have been reading. If you would put a few of these thoughts on paper so much the better. Bring

them along—they may be of help to your fellow-members.

Sometimes, especially when we feel run down and out of sorts, that old desire for something fixed will keep troubling us, and we may feel that a religion which, after all, seems to be only able to contradict faiths which others have put their trust in, and does not offer anything very clear to take their place in some way, falls short of our needs. What help can be offered? I think just this, and I cannot put the statement and the advice better or shorter than it has been done.

“Things change, and a man is foolish to act as though they didn’t. He’s just got to keep playing along according to the rules of the game; and they keep changing, too.”

“It is for us to see that the rules change for the better, as we have always done; also that they do not hamper others in their efforts, for there is a boundary to freedom, and it is where one man’s freedom becomes another’s bondage.”

We have wandered inwards, and there is no goal in sight. Will someone more able now take up the running—either inward or outward—and tell us a little more about ourselves.

They say, and I am glad they say,

It is so, and it may be so;

It may be quite the other way:

I do not know, but this I know—

From quiet homes and first beginnings,

Out to the undiscovered ends,

There’s nothing worth the wear of winning,

Save laughter and the love of friends.



Reports.

Unity Guild.—In another part of the present issue is published the paper read by Mr. G. J. Hill to the Guild at Mountpottinger on 18th November. It is interesting to record that active steps are already being taken to form a local centre in connection with the First House. A committee of the young people has been appointed, and meetings are to begin with a whist drive early in the New Year. The meeting of the Guild, which took place on December 16th, was held in the Central Hall, the social part of the

entertainment being in the hands of the First House. The attendance was almost as large as at the preceding meeting, but, unfortunately, there was some diffidence on the part of those present to make impromptu speeches. The committee had selected a number of subjects, which were written on cards enclosed in envelopes. Each speaker chose an envelope at random, and, on opening it, was obliged to speak on whatever subject was on the card which it contained. It was a difficult test for unpractised speakers, and, though one or two good speeches resulted, there seemed to be a certain lack of enthusiasm on the part of both speakers and audience. This is all the greater pity, as the idea is a good one, and quite new to our meetings. Perhaps its very novelty was the cause of its only partial success. Tea warmed the gathering up, however, and the observation and memory test which followed was worked at with considerable interest. Out of 26 objects viewed in passing the table on which they were displayed, two of the ladies succeeded in observing and memorising 20 each, and were presented with copies of Moore’s “Irish Melodies” in recognition of their powers. This brought the meeting to a close rather earlier than usual. The continued and increasing interest which is being taken in the Guild is shown by the fact that 25 new members were enrolled during the evening. There are two Guild meetings next month—one, the Annual Soiree, and the most important social function of the Guild year—is to take place on January 15th, in the Central Hall. It has been decided that it shall take the form of a whist drive this year, and it is confidently hoped that with the increasing membership there will be a record attendance. The committee desires particularly to draw attention to the fact that it is hoped to raise a sufficient sum by the sale of tickets to enable a substantial subscription to be given to the Belgian Relief Fund. Tickets (2/6 each) may be obtained from the hon. secretary, Mr. Eustace Gordon, 35 Rosemary Street, Belfast, or any member of the committee. The Ladies’ Night, which has always

proved one of the most attractive meetings in the past, is to be held in Mountpottinger School-room, on January 20th, when the speakers are to be Mrs. John Campbell and Mrs. Eustace Thompson. It has yet to be decided which of the churches is to be responsible for the social half of this evening.

All Souls' Church, Belfast.—The church has just lost an old and excellent member in the person of Miss Eliza Miniss, who died somewhat unexpectedly on 6th December. A daughter of the late George Miniss, Gloman Lodge, Ahoghill, Co. Antrim, she had ancestral connection with our body, and her loss is on that account all the more deplored. The funeral took place from her residence in Limestone Road (where she lived with an elder sister, who survives her), to the old burial ground at Muckamore, on 7th December. Edmund Miller died in his 16th year. He was a most valued member of our Sunday school and choir, and was Senior Patrol Leader in our troop of Boy Scouts (7th Belfast). He was very popular at Queen's University, where he worked with his father, Mr. Harry Miller, and where he was intending to study with a view to becoming a doctor. On the day of his funeral (10th December), the flag of the University was at half-mast, and the most representative gathering assembled for the service, including President Hamilton, Prof. T. H. Milroy, Drs. John Milroy, W. W. D. Thompson, John Gibson, W. J. Wilson and T. Houston; Mr. Green (Bursar of the College), Revs. Dr. Purves, Dodds, G. J. Slipper, and F. Woolley. The service was conducted by Rev. E. H. Pickering. The 7th troop of Boy Scouts turned out in good numbers to pay a last tribute to their late comrade by giving him a scout's funeral.

The Ladies' Sewing Society have done excellent work for the soldiers. They have despatched several large parcels of useful garments, &c., to different regiments, but in particular to the 19th Lancers (Indian troops), and have received in each case a grateful letter acknowledging the receipt of the parcels.

Ballycarry.—On Friday evening last a concert was held in aid of the "Princess Mary's" Fund for soldiers and sailors, by the scholars of the day school in connection with the Old Presbyterian Church (Non-Subscribing), of which school Mr. Alexander Ellis is manager. Although the weather was very inclement, the room was filled to overflowing, and a most successful programme was presented to the audience. The main features of the programme consisted of songs, action songs, musical drill, dialogue and recitations by the scholars, who had been most carefully trained by Mr. Colquhoun and Miss Smyth, the energetic master and mistress of the school. Among the ladies and gentlemen who kindly assisted in various capacities to add to the success of the evening's entertainment were the Misses Caldwell, Orr, Chism, M. Smyth, Hamilton, Legge, Baird, Mesdames Marsden and Martin, and Messrs. M'Kee, Mitchell, Craig, Erskine, and others.

Ballymoney.—A collection taken up recently in our Ballymoney Church for the Prince of Wales' Relief Fund amounted to £23 3s. We have also received from Ballymoney a name for the Roll of Honour, which will appear in our next revised list.

Hollywood.—The Annual Meeting and Soiree was held on Tuesday, December 8th. After tea had been served, the chair was taken by Rev. G. L. Phelps, and the business was first taken. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, showing a balance on the right side, were adopted, on the motion of Mr. Niall Nelson, seconded by Mr. B. Shannon. The following were elected to serve on the Committee:—Miss Murphy, Dr. Greenfield, Mr. R. F. Patterson, and Mr. H. Shannon, and a vote of thanks to the members of the choir was passed. The Total Abstinence Society had got rather badly into debt, but Miss Munster very kindly offered a picture, painted by herself, to be balloted for, and the Chairman was able to announce that the proceeds more than wiped out the debt. At the conclusion of the business an excellent

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programme of music, etc., was carried through. Pianoforte solo by Miss Munster, songs by Miss Graham, Miss Murphy, Mr. Charles Nelson, and Mr. James Shannon; reading by Miss Praeger, and recitations by Miss Edens Osborne. There was a very good attendance.



Owing to pressure of space we are compelled to hold over important reports from Dunmurry, Moneyrea, and Mountpottinger.

CORN IS ARRIVING IN GOOD CONDITION

We have several lots coming in, and offer best **Yellow Indian Meal** at moderate prices. Although Russian Cake is not coming into our Market this season, we are well supplied in both **English and Canadian Cakes**. The crop of Linseed did not turn out as large as expected, yet we are able to place **Linseed Cake** before our Customers at moderate prices, considering the level at which other Feedings are being sold.

Sowing Flaxseed.—We have already received a consignment of Dutch Sowing Seed, and we found a very ready sale for same. Two other consignments are shortly to arrive, and we advise our Customers to purchase immediately. We will sell as far as our purchases go, and would like our Customers to communicate with us at once.

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The Department of Agriculture are recommending Farmers to break up Lea Land and sow a larger quantity of Oats, Wheat, etc., than usual. We hope Farmers will take this hint, as no doubt a larger quantity of farm produce will be a great advantage to our nation. We sell the right Plough to break up Lea Land. Our Ploughs have gained more First Prizes in Down and Antrim than any others. Write for Lists and Quotations for any Implement required on the Farm.

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